

**PROGRAMME OF PRIMARY PREVENTION OF HIV/AIDS AND RISK BEHAVIOUR FOR TEENAGERS**

**LESSON 14. ADDICTION TO PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES**

***Problem definition. Information for facilitator.***

*Consumption of psychoactive substances is an urgent issue inseparable from the problem of HIV infection. People should have a good understanding of the issues related to psychoactive substance addiction and know the way to overcome it in order to remain healthy and independent of drugs, toxic and pharmaceutical substances. Responsibility for using PAS or not is a choice of each person. Man is born free of pathological addiction. His choice, the right and the responsibility is to preserve this freedom.*

***Goal:***

Forming of profound understanding of the issue of PAS addiction, acknowledgement of involvement.

***Start***

**Exercise “In and out of circle”**

Goal: training the skill of opposing a group, ability to persuade, to say ‘No’

Materials needed: none

Description: All participants stand in a circle holding hands. A volunteer is either outside the circle or inside it. His task is to break out of the cycle by all means if he is inside, or break into the circle, if he is outside. The group's task is to prevent him from doing so. Any method can be used except physical and psychological damage. It is recommended to give the role of a volunteer to each member of the group.

***Working on the topic***

**Information for facilitator:**

***“Depend – from smb, from smth, be in the power of, be under strong influence of smb’s will”***

*V. Dal, Thesaurus*

***“Dependence (dependence syndrome) – (in relation to alcohol and drugs) is a need for repeated doses of alcohol (drugs) and other substances of the drug to feel good or to avoid feeling bad”***

*WHO: Glossary of Alcohol and Drugs Terms*

***Psychoactive substance*** Any substance that, when ingested, affects mental processes, cognition, mood, learning ability, behaviour and movement. In common parlance psychoactive substances are often referred to as drugs. However, PAS include not only drugs, but also alcohol, tobacco (nicotine), caffeine, etc. There are legal and illegal psychoactive substances.

***Legal psychoactive substances*** are substances not prohibited by law to use, possess and distribute (tobacco, coffee, tea, all drinks containing spirit).

***Illegal psychoactive substances*** are substances use, distribution, and possession of which is illegal, including:

- 1) produced from hemp plant (marihuana, hashish, etc)
- 2) opiates (opium, heroin, morphine, etc.)
- 3) stimulants (ephedrine, ecstasy, cocaine, pervitin (‘speed’)
- 4) hallucinogen (LSD, some types of mushrooms)

***Narcotic drugs** are substances of synthetic or natural origin, medicines and plants included in the List of Narcotic Drugs subject to control in the Russian Federation in accordance with treaties and international agreements of the Russian Federation.*

**Psychoactive substances leading to dependence:**

- alcohol
- nicotine
- cocaine and its synthetic analogue – crack
- cannabinoids (hashish, marijuana), opiates (opium, morphine, heroin, promedol, codeine, methadone)
- sedative-hypnotics and anxiolytic drugs (barbiturates, tranquilizers)
- hallucinogens (LSD, psilocybin)
- stimulants (amphetamine, caffeine, methamphetamine ('speed'), ecstasy)
- anabolic steroids
- volatiles - inhalants (vapour of stain remover, acetone, toluene, adhesives, varnishes, paints)

*The basis of PAS dependence is **ADDICTION** – inability to exclude drugs from one's life due to constant need of using them and **TOLERANCE** – the need to constantly increase the dose to achieve the desired effect.*

*Psychological prerequisites for starting the use of PAS are low self-esteem, difficulty in communicating with peers and adults, lack of skills for solving personal problems, an inability to resist peer pressure, etc. Psychological manifestations of PAS addiction are strengthening of negative emotions, denial of problems and isolation.*

*Social preconditions for use of psychoactive substances are numerous problems in society, economic gain from selling drugs, cultural acceptability of using certain substances, inability to resist pressure from society, etc. Manifestation of psychoactive substance dependence on the social level is criminal way of life, isolation, an environment where PAS use is accepted, addiction as a family disease.*

**Criteria of PAS abuse:**

*Substance use leading to one or more behavioural disorders within past twelve months:*

- a) repeated use of substance results in an obvious decrease in adaptation in important spheres of social activity (truancy, deterioration of academic performance, neglect of family responsibilities)
- b) repeated use in situations of physical life danger (driving a car, operating a machine while intoxicated)
- c) repeated offences caused by abnormalities of behaviour and illegal acts due to use of substances
- d) continued use despite constant interpersonal problems caused or intensified by use of substances (conflicts with parents, spouse about consequences of intoxication, etc.)

**Forms of dependence:**

*I. Group psychological PAS dependence is observed in teenagers and is characterized by the need for psychoactive substance use arising in a group consisting of important peers ('my company'). Outside the group where group substance use occurs there is no need for substance. Such dependence indicates a certain situational predisposition to the formation of the disease and a greater probability of its occurrence. If at this stage preventive measures allow ceasing contact with 'the company', a teenager would usually stop using drugs.*

*II. Individual psychological dependence is a pathological need for the use of psychoactive substance to achieve psychological comfort in a state of intoxication. A pause in drug use leads to anxiety, tension and depressed mood. Subjectively there is a persistent desire to repeat the use of psychoactive substances. The patient is not burdened by addiction and does not try to overcome it, takes steps to satisfy his needs.*

### **Self-destructive behaviour**

*PAS use is a false and destructive way for filling a spiritual vacuum. **Self-destructive behaviour** is not only related to harming one's health but also damaging personal development, spirituality, and morality which are difficult to make up for, leading in the end to dysfunction of personality and social disadaptation of various degrees.*

### **Codependence**

***Codependence** is a persistent abnormal psychological condition experienced by relatives or friends of dependent persons where they are completely immersed in the problems connected with addiction. A codependent person does not realize that his life has also become in a way uncontrollable and dependent on these problems. Codependent people claim to overcome dependence, but in fact their inadequate actions unintentionally tend to perpetuate it.*

*Characteristics of a codependent person:*

- exaggerating their own strength, significance, or, on the contrary, weakness and helplessness*
- external control of behaviour, usually focused on PAS dependent person*
- 'frozen feelings', inability to recognize and understand their own feelings, their uncontrolled manifestation in behaviour*
- low self-esteem*
- closed, manipulative communication*
- social and psychological isolation*
- too vague or overly strict boundaries of individual and family*
- destructive roles in the family*

*The facilitator should emphasize the fact that there are no light drugs. Although each drug has its own peculiarities, the mechanism of dependence development is similar for all PAS. Despite a variety of individual reactions to drugs and the consequences of their use, all addicts fairly quickly form a habit of changing their mood by use of PAS.*

*"Then you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free" (John 8:32)*

*"Jesus replied, 'I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave to sin'"(John 8:34)*

*"Free is not the man who is left to himself, who has no obstacles, so that he can do whatever comes to his mind. Free is the person who acquired an internal ability to build up his spirit from the material of his passions and talents, and, therefore, first of all, an ability to control himself and behave, and secondly an internal capacity to live and work in the field of spiritual experience, voluntarily, sincerely, and integrally present in his love and his faith. Truly free is a spiritually independent person, but a person free only on the outside can abuse his freedom and turn it into a perfect internal unfreedom, in terrifying inner slavery."*

*I.A.Ilyin, Way of Spiritual Renovation, ch. 3 'On Freedom'*

*"When a man yields to his instincts, he gives in ... this means that he freely renounces his freedom in order to find justification for his unfreedom ... a true human begins, where he finds the freedom to resist dependence ... For only there, in this freedom, in the feeling of a free and responsible being a genuine person emerges."*

**Option 1. Discussion 'Why people use psychoactive substances?'**

Goal: getting objective information about PAS effects

Materials needed: none

Description: facilitator is required to conduct the discussion in a serious and open way

Questions for discussion:

- Why do people use drugs?
- What are the consequences of drugs use?
- The pros and cons of refusing an offer to try drugs?
- What is substance dependence?
- What makes people use drugs?
- What substances cause development of dependence?
- Why is PAS dependence a chronic, incurable, progressive and fatal disease?

**Facilitator's conclusion:**

*Psychoactive substances, which certainly include drugs, lead to psychological and physical dependence. They are extremely toxic and lead to the development of various chronic diseases, often very serious. A person is born free of pathological dependence. It is his choice, right and responsibility always to preserve this freedom.*

**Option 2. Role play 'Let's be friends!'**

Goal: Awareness of personal involvement with the problem, development of skills to resist group's pressure, awareness of behavioural strategies often used by young people in a situation of pressure; change in behavioural strategies.

Materials needed: none

Description: members of the group are friends, 'well-to-do' girls and boys. One of the participants is a volunteer playing a role of a recovering drug addict who wants to enter into the company and make friends with its members. The goal is to show how the company of friends responds to the attempts of a recovering drug addict to join them.

**Information for facilitator:**

*Possible reactions of the group: acceptance, rejection, indifference, disapproval, etc.*

Questions for discussion:

- What the participants felt?
- Was it difficult to resist the pressure of the group?
- What was the critical factor for choosing a strategy of behaviour?
- In your opinion, what behavioural strategy is most effective in this situation? Why?

**Option 3. Role play 'Join us!'**

Goal: Awareness of personal involvement with the problem, development of skills to resist group's pressure, awareness of behavioural strategies often used by young people in a situation of pressure; change in behavioural strategies.

Materials needed: none

Description: Participants represent a group of teenagers gathered at a party. They drink alcohol. Volunteer (boy or girl) portrays a teenager who is trying to refuse to drink. The group's task is to persuade, while the volunteer's task is to offer as many arguments and methods to refuse without provoking a conflict in the group (keeping friendships).

Questions for discussion:

- What the participants felt?
- Was it difficult to resist the pressure of the group?
- What was the critical factor for choosing a strategy of behaviour?
- In your opinion, what behavioural strategy is most effective in this situation? Why?

**Facilitator's conclusion:**

*Your future is in your own hands. A person always has an opportunity to say 'No' to those people whose proposals do not correspond to his principles, views, interests or desires.*

***Summing up***

Goal: making a conclusion

Materials needed: none

Description: Facilitator emphasizes personal responsibility of a person for involvement in psychoactive substance use.

The group discusses the following questions:

- What new happened during the class?
- What surprised you? What was unexpected?

***Homework:***

Goal: verbalization of lessons learned

Materials needed: workbook

Description: participants write an essay "A letter to a friend who tried drugs for the first time".